

March 20, 1940

Nelle Y. McLaughlin
Marlinton, W. Va.

-1-

Pocahontas County

Chapter 5-- Section 3

I learn from some of the writings of Mr. Andrew Price that he had made two visits to the flint quarries or flint pits on Stamping Creek, near Mill Point. These workings are in sight of the State highway known as the Seneca Trail on Mr. Tom Beard's farm about a mile and a half back of his residence, in a fine blue grass pasture. There are several hundred of the pits.

The most remarkable thing is that part of the range that has been called the Rich Garden for the past one hundred or so years. It is a pasture now but Mr. William Beard farmed it for a number of years. Though the land has been plowed many times, the pits are plain to be seen. At first sight it looks like a place that had been a village, where houses had been set close together walls touching, and under each house there had been a cellar. This little hollow owes its great fertility to the disintegration of the limestone, and there can be little doubt but that a large number of boulders or flint nodules were deposited there and that the Indians worked the land to a depth of some ten or twenty feet to get the flint.

Nearby are piles of round river sandstone or hammer stones and Mr. Price says that near these flint quarries these hammer stones or nut crackers are invariably found. M. D. Dunlap who lived on Stamping Creek said that these hammer stones were to be found in great quantities there.

-2-

Pocahontas County

Here was Pocahontas County's oldest industry. The red men as far north as Ohio and Marshall Counties would send their young men here with their spades made from the antlers of deer, elk and moose, staked their claims and worked them and carried back to the flint workers the nodules secured on the expedition.

Peter Lightner was one of the first settlers in what is now Pocahontas County. He was a German-Dutchman and came from the eastern part of the state. He settled on Knapps Creek. Prior to his coming, there were no mills nearer than Staunton which was a hundred miles distant through a trackless wilderness. This was too far to think of going to mill so the people prepared their own corn for bread. The method was simple: a large tree was felled, from which a block or cut was taken, which when placed on end was probably as high as a man's waist. It was placed on end in front of the cabin, then a fire was built upon it and so managed that an inverted cone was formed. From this the charred coals were taken and the hominy block was ready for use. A peck or more of shelled corn was put in and pounded until it was reduced to coarse meal from which bread was then baked. Another plan was to boil the corn until it was quite soft, then pound into a jelly which was dried and used as needed. This preparation was called hominy meal. Mr Lightner remedied all this. He erected a mill and, although

Pocahontas County

some of the pioneers had to come thirty miles, they considered it an easy task to provide bread. This mill was located on Knapps Creek. Although over a hundred years have passed, yet a portion of the old mill and a trace of the race still remain. Mr. Lightner sold this old mill to John Bradshaw who in turn sold it to Henry Harper. The buhrs are now in an old mill in Highland County, Virginia.

The first tub mill and saw mill in the Greenbank District was owned and operated about 1800 by the pioneer Wooddells, Probably Joseph Wooddell, the Revolutionary War veteran. A tilt hammer was installed at this mill which was very much needed by the pioneers in making tools and implements of iron and steel.

In the year 1822 Patrick Bruffey purchased from Jacob Gillispie and James Tallman one hundred thirty-four acres of land which was a part of the Thomas Jarvis Grant of four hundred acres. He built a grist mill and a saw mill and carved a mill race out of the hillside more than a quarter of a mile. In connection with the saw mill, he established a wagon shop, blacksmith shop, and supplied the neighborhood with wagons. The late William Sutton of the Hill neighborhood learned the wagon makers trade under Patrick Bruffey and carried on the work long after the Civil War. Patrick Bruffey was Magistrate in the

Pocahontas - 7

West Virginia Writers' Project
RESEARCH IDENTIFICATION REPORT

Subject Commerce And Industry

Date 1/31/41

Tilt-hammer

Date Research Taken No certain time

Research Worker Samuel G Smith

Date Typed 1/30, 31/41

Typist Samuel G Smith

Source John B Buckley, A.W Lightner
Nancy A McNeill, John G McNeill
And Willis McKeever all of Buckeye, W.Va
Court Records, Marlinton, W.Va.

Date Filed _____

Have been working on this at spare time whenever I came in contact with anyone that knew or had heard of this operation.

